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GLORIA MOLINA URGES SUPPORT FOR 'DREAM ACT'

65,000 Students Annually Forgoing College Due to Immigration Status a 'Personal Nightmare' for Students and a 'National Tragedy' for America

LOS ANGELES (September 17, 2010)—Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Gloria Molina issued the following statement today regarding S.729, the "Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act of 2009," commonly known as the DREAM Act.

"Now is the time for supporters of immigrants' rights, especially those in the Latino community, to urge President Barack Obama and all members of Congress to pass the DREAM Act. Each year, approximately 65,000 students across America who ordinarily would attend college must forgo the opportunity because their parents are undocumented immigrants. These students often were raised their entire lives in the United States—America is their home—and though they may have lived their entire lives here, most are disqualified from paying in-state tuition, their dreams of a college education dashed. Most importantly, because of their parents' immigration status they are also prevented from seeking a path to citizenship, making the current state of the law a personal nightmare for these students—and a national tragedy for all Americans. Both for the long-term economic growth and viability of our nation, we cannot ignore our homegrown talent nor should we allow the needs of deserving students and military personnel become embroiled in petty politics. Passage of the DREAM Act is the right thing to do, and it is consistent with our nation's fundamental values of justice, fairness, and merit. We cannot let the intellectual power of yet another class of academically stellar, law-abiding young Americans go to waste. Passage of the DREAM Act would change the lives of undocumented students, their families, and their communities for the better. These motivated, conscientious young people could potentially make invaluable enhancements to America's public and private sectors, as well as our military, and contribute to our nation's Social Security trust fund. In California, undocumented students qualify for in-state tuition costs thanks to AB 540, authored by the late Assemblyman Marco Firebaugh—but they still do not qualify for publicly funded financial aid. Now is the time to speak out, to contact our congressional representatives and President Obama, and to ask them to make this DREAM a reality—and I cannot thank Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid enough for putting new momentum behind the DREAM Act's passage in Congress."

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